

Governor Honors Mr. Berry



Governor Bryant came to Richard Berry's retirement party to honor him for his service to the state and to wish him well. He had nothing but good things to say about Mr. Berry in his leadership role at the department. He also commended John Davis and said he knows the department will be in good hands under his guidance!

A Message from the Executive Director

It does not matter how many days, weeks or years you have been an employee of the Mississippi Department of Human Services there is one constant...change. "Change is the only constant." Heraclitus, Greek philosopher. As I look back over the past 25 years, I am reminded how much human services has changed. This is true not only for Mississippi but across the United States. Organizations, such as MDHS, must be willing to evolve if we truly want to provide exceptional service to those who seek our assistance.

The past three months have been consumed by the legislative session which has now ended. There were many bills proposed, and some passed directly affecting MDHS. Specifically, Senate Bill 2179 which brings change for everyone.

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State Health Insurance Program and Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (SHIP/MIPPA) Training at MDHS



On Thursday February 25, 2016, a SHIP/MIPPA training was conducted at MDHS by SHIP Program Administrator, Brandon Davis and MIPPA Program Manager, Penny Burns with SHIP Coordinators throughout the state.

The training featured guest speakers Melissa Simpson with National Council on Aging, Marlene Franklin with MS Division of Medicaid and Barrie L. Carpenter with the Social Security Administration. The purpose of the training was to introduce the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program to the coordinators who will provide counseling and application assistance to low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

During this training, demonstrations were given on the use of SHIP's National Performance Reporting (SHIP NPR) system, Part D Low-Income Subsidy, and Medicare Cost-Sharing Programs also known as the Medicare Savings Program. The information provided from the various guest speakers proved to be very informational to the coordinators for them to continue providing outstanding customer service to the targeted populations.

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SENATE BILL NO. 2179 (As Sent to Governor)

"AN ACT TO CREATE A NEW MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES; TO PROVIDE FOR A COMMISSIONER OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND THE COMMISSIONER OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES SHALL DEVELOP A TRANSITION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT; TO PROVIDE FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO THE NEW MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES EFFECTIVE 9 JULY 1, 2018."

We are so very fortunate Dr. David Chandler, former Supreme Court Justice, agreed to step into the role as head of the Division of Family and Children Services in January of this year. His vast experience in education, the courts and public service in general has certainly equipped him for this mission. More importantly, his love for the children and families in Mississippi provides the most important ingredient for us to successfully achieve our goal to make safety, security and the wellbeing of every child a reality.

Also, you may be interested in reviewing our agency's appropriation bill.

HOUSE BILL NO. 1652 (As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2017.

As an agency, we are poised to do great things. While we were cut in every division except Family and Children Services, we must remember that some of our greatest accomplishments have become reality during some of our most difficult times. Again, change will be necessary to ensure continued exceptional service delivery. Every process must be evaluated so that we do not have duplicated services (administrative or programmatic) or we are simply doing something because "that is how we have always done it" without regard to cost effectiveness and efficiency. The duty for those of us who work in the State Office must be to find a way to better support the efforts of those who have direct contact with our clients.

There are many changes daily in each of our offices that may be challenging, but often times we find the change has been well overdue. I am very aware that change is certain, progress is not. So the intentionality behind any change should be that the benefits must outweigh the costs of changing. I, like many, believe technology will continue to drive the change we see happening in human services; but, as a very wise mentor told me, by definition, we will never take the human out of the services we provide at MDHS.

We have the opportunity to serve one out of every four adults and one out of every three children in the State of Mississippi through the programs offered at MDHS. That is a responsibility and a privilege we all take seriously. Your hard work and dedication is a testament to your commitment to excellence, and I count it an honor to be part of the MDHS team.

John Davis
Executive Director

May is National Mental Health Month

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) is recognizing the month of May as National Mental Health Month, a time to reinforce and share its mission of supporting a better tomorrow by making a difference in the lives of all Mississippians with behavioral health or substance use disorders.

This recognition began 67 years ago by Mental Health America, a nonprofit dedicated to the needs of those living with mental illness, to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone. This year's theme, "Life with a Mental Illness," seeks to share what life is like for those living with a mental illness – the struggles faced by everyday people, but coupled with an illness that is often misunderstood and rarely talked about openly.

Mental illnesses are much more common than many people realize. About one in five adults experience mental health issues, and about one in 10 young people experience major mental health issues.

Mental health issues affect people of all ages, races and backgrounds. Unfortunately, mental illness is still a topic many people avoid talking about, and some people are afraid to seek help if they believe they are having mental health issues.

DMH wants to encourage people to think again about mental illness - everyone should be free to talk about their health, get help if it is needed, and know they are free from judgement whatever their health condition.

Throughout the month, people living with mental illnesses will be embracing the "Life with a Mental Illness" theme and sharing their personal stories on Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag #mentalillnessfeelslike. It is a way to speak up, to share their points of view with others and to help others figure out if they too are showing signs of a mental illness.

It is important to know that mental illnesses are common, treatable and help is available. Here in Mississippi, the Department of Mental Health operates a Help Line that is available 24 hours a day at 1-877-210-8513. It is important to reach out for help if you think it is needed, and also to speak out and share stories of recovery and hope.



Did you know?

May is also Stroke Awareness Month
&
Skin Cancer Awareness Month!



April is Child Abuse Awareness Month



Lafayette County/Region 1S with players from the Ole Miss Football team at the 5K to raise awareness for child abuse

On April 18th, Gov. Phil Bryant signed into law the Termination of Parental Rights Act and the Juvenile Detention Licensing Act.

"With your help we have taken that next step in making sure juvenile detention centers are licensed for safety," the Governor told judges, child protection agency heads and children's justice advocates who had gathered at the Mississippi Supreme Court to hear a presentation about protecting infants and toddlers who are abused and neglected.

The Governor and First Lady Deborah Bryant sat in on part of a presentation about the Zero to Three Safe Babies Court Team Approach and the Excel by Five program for infants and toddlers. The Governor brought with him and signed the Juvenile Detention Licensing Act. He signed the Termination of Parental Rights Act earlier in the day before attending the meeting.

Jurist in Residence John Hudson of Natchez, who has worked for many years to bring about improvements in juvenile detention facilities, said, "I think it's a huge step forward in juvenile justice in Mississippi. It will mean that when children are placed in detention facilities, we can be confident that they are placed in a facility where their safety and well being is uppermost."

Rankin County Court Judge Thomas Broome, chair of the Council of Youth Court Judges and co-chair of the Commission on Children's Justice, said, "The administration of justice for children has been greatly improved today by the signing of the Termination of Parental Rights Act and Juvenile Detention Licensing Act. The Governor and the First Lady understand the importance of the collaborative efforts of all the stakeholders working together to improve the lives of children and families."



Photo Credit: WDAM

Laurel Mayor Johnny Magee held a proclamation signing ceremony on Tuesday recognizing Child Abuse Awareness Month. The event was held at the Mississippi Department of Human Services building in Ellisville. Jones County Division of Family and Children's Services. It was a way of expressing appreciation to the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, South Central Regional Medical Center and local law enforcement agencies. Their work has been vital in the prevention of child abuse and in helping families break free from the cycle of child abuse.



Mississippi Blood Services would like to invite Mississippi Department of Human Services to join their statewide challenge to #Give1Save3 to show that MISSISSIPPI CARES! They are challenging State and Government Agencies across the state to help them ensure the blood supply stays at an adequate level during May. May is often a busy time as people wrap up school, gear up for summer and begin traveling. However, the need for blood is constant. In fact, every TWO seconds someone needs blood and you never know when it will be someone you know and love.

MDHS will be hosting their own blood drive on **May 18th in Training Room A on the 2nd Floor**. Mississippi patients rely on volunteer blood donors like you to Give 1 and Save 3!



- As a result of President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt refusing to shoot a trapped bear, the Teddy Bear was created but many don't realize that this incident occurred in Sharkey County.

- Borden's Condensed Milk was first canned in Liberty, MS.

- The world's only and largest cactus plantation was in Edwards, MS.

- What's now known as Barq's Root Beer was created in Biloxi but the drink was first bottled in Vicksburg.

Toy Lending Library in Gulfport Provides Thousands of Free Materials for Parents



Story and photo courtesy of WLOX News Now:

Let's face it. Toys can be expensive, especially if you're trying to keep up with the ever-changing stages of your infant or toddler. That's where a toy lending library can come in handy.

The Early Years Network, a division of the Mississippi State Extension Service, operates a toy lending library in Gulfport, tucked in the Jeff Davis Campus of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

There you'll find boxes filled with musical instruments, colorful blocks, shelves packed with books, and a variety of games. Literally thousands of items are available for parents and childcare providers to check out.

Mandy Smith helps operate the Resource and Referral Center where the library is housed. She thinks one of the biggest benefits of the library, is what it can offer childcare providers.

"Because we're always encouraging the providers to rotate their materials out so the children don't get bored. So kind of gives them that service of materials they can come and check out for free, without having to go out and buy it."

It's a great benefit for parents, too. Any of the learning tools can be checked out for two weeks at a time, at no cost. The only thing you have to do is fill out a little paperwork.

"Anybody is welcome to come in," says Smith. "We have just a little form for them to fill out so we can keep track, kind of like a library."

MDHS wants to thank The Early New Years Network for their devotion to helping families and childcare providers.

Sherman Nunn

Courtesy of JPS:

The Jackson Public School District established a District-wide Pre-Kindergarten through College (P-16) Council on January 14, 2016, at Murrah High School. MDHS' very own, Sherman Nunn, was recently appointed president of the P-16 Council. The purpose of the P-16 Council is to engage and empower members of education, parent-teacher, civic, business, faith-based, and nonprofit community organizations to make policy recommendations for the purpose of providing every JPS scholar with a quality pre-K through post-secondary educational experience.



Sherman Nunn
P-16 Council President

Spring '16 Staff Conference



During the Spring 2016 Staff conference, EWs were thanked for their hard work and service on Eligibility Worker Appreciation day.

RETIREMENTS



Earl Walker

Earl D. Walker, MDHS Chief Financial Officer, retired from the agency after seven years of service. A retirement celebration was held by the Division of Budgets and Accounting Staff to honor his dedication and service to the Agency and the Division of Budgets and Accounting. Mr. Walker's knowledge and expertise were instrumental in the implementation of MAGIC for the agency. Congratulations and job well done!



Ruby Reid

Ruby Reid retired with 34 years of service. Greene County honored Ms. Reid with a lovely retirement party and a certificate for her service. We wish her all the best in her future!



Peggy Gear

Region 7E celebrated Peggy Gear's retirement after 28 years. They had a catered luncheon for Ms. Gear and a full day of celebrating her retirements. Thanks for your service!

AWARDS

Debra Joplin

Debra is a Child Support Enforcement Supervisor of 2015 for Region 6. Joplin also supervises Stone & Perry County.



Vickie Gray

Vickie Gray is the Lamar County Director and she received the 2015 award for Leadership from Region 6.



Marvin Houston

Marvin Houston is the County Director of Pearl River County and received a certificate for County Director of the Year 2015 from Region 6.



Julia Davis

Julia is the County Director of Stone County. She received the Perserverance for 2015 for Region 6.



Angie Wilson

Angie is a Child Support Enforcement Supervisor for Pearl River County. Wilson received the Endurance Award for 2015 in Region 6.



Valentine's Special!



Sharkey FO/EA staff received a special treat this Valentine's Day! The Singing Hearts from Sharkey Issaquena Community Hospital were invited by County Director, Lynn Newman, to serenade them with their rendition of Signed, Sealed, and Delivered by Stevie Wonder. Each were presented with a box of candy for being such an awesome staff! Staff from left to right: Lequita Barfield, Anita Bell, Kate Sisney-Powell, and Deedra Williams.

DFO Training Highlights

The State Office recently welcomed eligibility workers and child support enforcement officers from across the state to Jackson for training. These frontline employees represent the "face of MDHS" to Mississippi residents who come to county offices for assistance. We appreciate the divisions' diligent work to train and maintain quality staff.



Eligibility Workers

Child Support Enforcement Officers



spring 2016

Music in May



2016 Blues Music Awards

May 5, Memphis, TN
www.blues.org

Jerry Clower Festival

May 6, Yazoo City
www.visit Yazoo.org

21st Annual Market Street Festival

May 6 - 7, Columbus
www.marketstreetfestival.com

Jimmie Rodgers Music Festival

May 6 - 7, Meridian
www.jimmierodgersmusicfestival.com

Clarksdale Caravan Music Fest

May 6 - 8, Clarksdale
Jimmie Rodgers' Memorial, Meridian

Deep Delta Blues Heritage Festival

May 7, Rolling Fork
www.lowerdelta.org

Mother's Day Blues Festival

May 8, Laurel
www.jonescounty.com

Leland Crawfish Festival

May 14, Leland
www.lelandms.org

MS Saxophone Harmonica Fest

May 21 (tentative), Clarksdale

B.B. King Homecoming Festival

May 28 - 29, Indianola
www.bbkingmuseum.com

12th Annual Jazz in the Pass

May 28 - 29, Pass Christian
www.gulfcoast.org

Lake Fest

May 28, Vicksburg
www.eaglelakematters.com

FestivalSouth

May 30 - June 18, Hattiesburg
www.festivalsouth.org



Desoto County Welcome Centery Tourism Week - May 1 - 7

Desoto County Welcome Centery Culinary Tour - May 1 - 31

Disturbed & Rob Zombie - May 3

Ben Shaw - May 4

Desoto Connect Business Expo 2016 - May 4

Shatners World. We Just Live In It - May 4

Chocolate Affair - May 5

National Day of Prayer/Natchez Day of Prayer - May 5

The Garden Club of Jackson Spring Garden Tour 2016 - May 5 - 6

Salute to Industry Golf Tournament - May 5

Creedence Clearwater Revisited - May 5

Jimmie Rodgers America's Blue Yodeler - May 5 - 10

Celtic Woman at Thalia Mara Hall - May 6

Spring Birding Weekend - May 6-8

Vicksburg Theatre Guild Presents "Greater Tuna" - May 6 - 8

Friday Featuring Blackberry Smoke - May 6

First Fridays at Lazy Magnolia Brewing Co. - May 6

Paul Anka - May 6

For more events, go to www.visitmississippi.org



ATTENTION:

Don't forget to send your news, photos, retirements, and events to mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov. Maybe next month, you'll see your county and staff featured in The Beacon!

FEEDBACK:

We'd like to hear from you, our MDHS readers. Do you have any tips you'd like to share? If so, email us at mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov